

CRS Report for Congress

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India: Chronology of Recent Events

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Summary

This report provides a reverse chronology of recent events involving India and India-U.S. relations. Sources include, but are not limited to, major newswires, the U.S. Department of State, and Indian news outlets. For a substantive review, see CRS Issue Brief IB93097, *India-U.S. Relations*, by K. Alan Kronstadt. This report will be updated regularly.

- 04/17/06 — An External Affairs Ministry spokesman said India will not accept any U.S.-India civil nuclear cooperation agreement provision that would limit its freedom to test nuclear weapons in the future.** On the same day, polls opened in the first round of voting for a new state legislature in West Bengal, where the long-ruling Marxists hope to widen their advantage over the Congress Party.
- 04/14/06 — Two bombs exploded at New Delhi's main mosque,** injuring at least 13 people. No one claimed responsibility for the attack. On the same day, a series of grenade attacks by suspected separatist militants killed at least 5 people and wounded another 18 in Srinagar, Kashmir. Also, a senior Indian Air Force officer said India will reduce the number of joint air exercises with foreign militaries to two per year and will hold such exercises with the United States once every three years.
- 04/13/06 — Prime Minister Singh identified a worsening Maoist insurgency as “the single biggest internal security challenge” ever faced by India,** saying it threatened “our democracy, our way of life.”
- 04/12/06 —** The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation agreed in principle to grant the United States (and South Korea) observer status. On the same day, an Indian intelligence official and five suspected separatist militants were killed in a gunbattle in Kashmir.
- 04/11/06 —** India's Air Force chief announced that India had begun work on creating an inter-services military Aerospace Command.
- 04/10/06 — Afghan President Karzai met with top Indian leaders in New Delhi,** where Prime Minister Singh pledged another \$50 million in assistance to

Acronyms:

BJP: Bharatiya Janata Party
IAEA: International Atomic
Energy Agency

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Afghanistan (bringing total assistance to \$650 million since 2001). On the same day, polls opened in the first round of voting for a new state legislature in Assam, where the incumbent Congress Party faces stiff competition from a more conservative regional party. Also, Pakistan lodged a formal protest with India, blaming the Indian Coast Guard for attacking a Pakistani fishing vessel, killing one crewman. Finally, suspected separatist militants killed three civilians in Kashmir.

- 04/09/06 — House Speaker Representative Dennis Hastert led a bipartisan House delegation on a four-day visit to New Delhi and Jaipur to meet with top Indian leaders. On the same day, Interpol issued a special worldwide notice against fugitive Indian crime figure Dawood Ibrahim, wanted in connection with 1993 terrorist bombings that killed more than 260 people in Bombay. Ibrahim may be in Pakistan. Also, a senior leader of the opposition BJP said the U.S.-India civil nuclear cooperation agreement would “jeopardize” India’s self-reliance by giving the U.S. president power over India’s nuclear programs.
- 04/08/06 — **The Ministry of External Affairs rejected a U.S. prompt that India better define its “minimum credible [nuclear] deterrent” requirements**, saying the “self-explanatory term” is a “response to a dynamic and changing security environment.”
- 04/07/06 — The BJP-controlled state legislature of Rajasthan passed a law banning “forced” religious conversions.
- 04/06/06 — **H.Con.Res. 388**, condemning human rights violations against the Kashmiri Pandits, was introduced in the House. On the same day, 4 people were killed and 19 injured in communal violence between Hindus and Muslims in the northern Uttar Pradesh state.
- 04/05/06 — **Key House and Senate committees hosted Secretary of State Rice for hearings on proposed U.S.-India civil nuclear cooperation.** Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Senator Richard Lugar said “we have only scratched the surface of this intricate agreement and the national security questions it has raised.” House International Relations Committee Chairman Representative Henry Hyde lauded a growing “global partnership” with India while raising concerns about the “possible detrimental impact” proposed nuclear cooperation could have on U.S. and global nonproliferation policy. Secretary Rice argued forcefully in favor of the Administration’s initiative, insisting it will deepen the bilateral strategic partnership, enhance energy security, benefit the environment, create opportunities for U.S. business, and enhance the international nuclear nonproliferation regime. Many Members expressed favorable attitudes toward the initiative while continuing to raise questions about the details of the Administration’s approach. On the same day, New Delhi police arrested six Islamic militants in connection with 3/7 terrorist bombings in Varanasi. One suspect is a cleric linked to the Bangladesh-based Harakat Jihad-al Islami terrorist group.
- 04/03/06 — **The State Department confirmed that two Iranian naval vessels had visited Indian ports in March**, but called it a “limited type of event” that does not suggest Indian involvement in training or contributing to Iranian military capabilities. Some in Congress expressed concern about India-Iran military ties. On the same day, the United States and India signed an

- agreement on India's participation in the FutureGen project to build an emissions-free coal-fired power plant.
- 04/02/06** — Five Maoist militants were killed in a gunbattle with police in the southern Andhra Pradesh state.
- 03/31/06** — One policeman and three suspected Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists were killed, and 11 other people injured, in separatist-related violence in Kashmir.
- 03/30/06** — During a visit to Washington, Foreign Secretary Saran defended proposed U.S.-India civil nuclear cooperation, rejecting fears that India would quickly bolster its nuclear weapons arsenal and calling the proposal a "critical component" of broader U.S.-India relations. On the same day, a University of Toronto-sponsored study found that the prevalence of HIV infection in four Indian states appeared to have fallen by 35% between 2000 and 2004, casting doubt on predictions of a major health catastrophe. Finally, Iran's foreign minister said that proposed U.S.-India civil nuclear cooperation will not detract from friendly India-Iran relations.
- 03/29/06** — In a *Washington Post* opinion article, former President Jimmy Carter criticized proposed civil nuclear cooperation with India as "just one more step in opening Pandora's box of nuclear proliferation." On the same day, the Indian and Pakistan commerce secretaries held Composite Dialogue talks on bilateral economic and commercial cooperation.
- 03/28/06** — Secretary of State Rice told a Senate panel that the United States would like to see India (and China) be more active pressuring the oppressive regime in Burma. On the same day, an Indian doctor was convicted for revealing the gender of a fetus to its parents, the first-ever such conviction under a 12-year-old law.
- 03/27/06** — In a speech to the Council on Foreign Relations, Under Secretary of State Burns said, "We see a possibility of creating with India one of the two or three or four most important strategic relationships that we have with any country in the world" and he claimed that civil nuclear cooperation with India "will cement the new [U.S.-India] strategic relationship." On the same day, five suspected separatist militants were killed in Kashmir.
- 03/26/06** — India and Israel reportedly agreed to hold their first-ever joint military exercises that would involve top-line Indian and Israeli fighter aircraft.
- 03/24/06** — In a speech marking the **launch of a new bus service** linking Amritsar, India with Nankana Sahib, Pakistan, **Prime Minister Singh said "India sincerely believes that a strong, stable, prosperous, and moderate Pakistan is in the interest of India,"** claimed India "is not afraid" to find a resolution to the Kashmir dispute, and envisioned entering into a Treaty of Peace, Security, and Friendship with Islamabad. Pakistan cautiously welcomed the comments while insisting that Kashmir remained the "heart of [bilateral] conflict, mistrust, and hostility." On the same day, **a landmine attack by Maoist militants killed 13 civilians** in the central Chhattisgarh state. The militants later issued a rare apology for the deaths, saying they had been targeting police. Also Maoist militants raided a jail in the eastern Orissa state, freeing 35 of their compatriots. Two policemen and three militants were killed in the raid.
- 03/23/06** — U.S. officials in Vienna failed to obtain a Nuclear Suppliers Group agreement to consider proposals for nuclear cooperation with India at the body's May 2006 plenary session. Opposition reportedly was led by Japan and Australia, with several other member states expressing reservations.

On the same day, Congress Party leader Sonia Gandhi resigned her seat in Parliament in an effort to defuse a dispute over claims she had broken parliamentary rules.

- 03/22/06 — Top Indian law enforcement officials met with their Pakistani counterparts in New Delhi to discuss increased cooperation in areas of mutual concern.
- 03/21/06 — During a visit to New Delhi by Bangladeshi Prime Minister Zia, India and Bangladesh agreed to cooperate in counterterrorism efforts.
- 03/20/06 — The U.S. Chamber of Commerce sent letters to Congress in support of legislation to allow for civil nuclear cooperation with India. On the same day, a landmine planted by Maoist militants killed at least 2 policemen and injured 10 others in the central Chhattisgarh state. Also, four suspected separatist militants were killed in a gunbattle in Kashmir. Finally, Texas-based Dell Inc. announced plans to double the size of its workforce in India to 20,000.
- 03/17/06 — Russian Premier Fradkov visited New Delhi, where India and Russia signed seven agreements to cooperate on space and energy issues. On the same day, Pakistani President Musharraf said proposed U.S.-India civil nuclear cooperation would “upset the balance of power” in Asia.
- 03/16/06 — **H.R. 4974 and S. 2429, to waive the application of certain requirements under the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 with respect to India** were, at the President’s request, introduced in the House and Senate, respectively. On the same day, President Bush’s 2006 National Security Strategy of the United States stated, “We have set aside decades of mistrust and put relations with India ... on a new and fruitful path.” Also, Under Secretary of State Burns said it will likely take “several months” to move forward with plans for civil nuclear cooperation with India and warned that to “reopen” the negotiated deal would probably risk its end. Finally, Pakistan’s foreign minister said the U.S.-India nuclear deal would “unravel” the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.
- 03/15/06 — The Energy Diplomacy and Security Act of 2006 (**S. 2435**), which includes India-related initiatives, was introduced in the Senate.
- 03/13/06 — A press statement from Chairman of the House International Relations Committee Representative Henry Hyde suggested that **Congress may seek conditions for approval of legislation to allow for civil nuclear cooperation with India**. On the same day, in a *Washington Post* opinion article, Secretary of State Rice argued that proposed civil nuclear cooperation with India “is an essential step toward our goal of transforming America’s partnership with India.” Also, Defense Minister Mukherjee said India would not compromise its relationship with Iran “at any cost.” Finally, three days of India-China talks on unresolved border disputes failed to make progress, but ended with agreement to meet again.
- 03/10/06 — **An open letter to Congress signed by 27 South Asia experts** urged approval of legislation to allow for civil nuclear cooperation with India.
- 03/09/06 — During a visit to Rangoon by Indian President Kalam, India and Burma agreed to move forward with efforts to bring Burmese natural gas to India. The house arrest of Burmese pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi was not discussed. On the same day, five suspected Maoist militants were killed in gunbattles with police in the central Chhattisgarh state. London-based Amnesty International expressed concern over the safety of civilians in the region’s “escalating conflict.”

- 03/08/06 — The White House issued a press release responding to critics of proposed U.S. civil nuclear cooperation with India.
- 03/07/06 — Apparent **terrorist bombings in the Hindu holy city of Varanasi (or Benares) killed at least 15 people** and injured more than 100 others. Investigators later implicated the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorist group. Security forces were deployed at holy sites across India in anticipation of communal violence, which did not occur.
- 03/06/06 — Prime Minister Singh told Parliament that India's 2/4 IAEA vote on Iran's nuclear program was made in India's national interest and that his government remains committed to "widening, deepening, and expanding" its ties with Iran.
- 03/05/06 — Hundreds of Maoist militants attacked a village in the central Chhattisgarh state, killing 6 people and injuring 33 more.
- 03/03/06 — **A report of the U.S.-India CEO Forum** identified India's poor infrastructure and dense bureaucracy as key impediments to increased bilateral trade and investment relations.
- 03/02/06 — **President and Prime Minister Singh issued a Joint Statement** expressing mutual satisfaction with "great progress" made in advancing the U.S.-India "strategic partnership." The statement, which reviewed bilateral efforts to expand ties in numerous areas, notably announced **"successful completion of India's [nuclear facility] separation plan,"** a reference to ongoing and complex negotiations related to President Bush's July 2005 vow to achieve "full civilian nuclear energy cooperation with India." **President Bush called the agreement "historic" and "necessary"** for helping the American and Indian people. On the same day, the Pentagon issued a statement lauding bilateral military relations with India and anticipating possibly major arms sales to that country.
- 03/01/06 — **President Bush arrived in New Delhi.** Many **thousands of mostly Muslim and communist protestors**, including some 100,000 Muslim men in New Delhi, marched in protest in several Indian cities.
- 02/28/06 — **President Bush began a four-day visit to South Asia.** On the same day, **Maoist rebels exploded a landmine under a truck in the central Chhattisgarh state, killing at least 55 people.**
- 02/27/06 — Prime Minister Singh assured Parliament that no IAEA safeguards would be accepted on the country's fast breeder reactors. On the same day, a group of major parties allied with the Congress-led ruling coalition declared that President Bush "was certainly not welcome in India." Also, a major opinion survey found 66% of Indians agreeing that President Bush is "a friend of India," while 72% believed America is "a bully."
- 02/22/06 — **In a major speech, President Bush lauded close U.S. relations with both India and Pakistan.** He called India a "natural partner for the United States" and identified five broad areas of bilateral cooperation: counterterrorism, democracy promotion, trade promotion, health and environmental protections, and energy initiatives.
- 02/20/06 — **Major parties allied with the Congress-led ruling coalition walked out of both houses of Parliament in protest**, saying the government had "compromised the national interest" by not demanding the recall of the U.S. Ambassador after his 1/25 and 1/29 comments. On the same day, French President Chirac visited New Delhi, where **India and France**

- agreed to further strengthen their “strategic partnership” and affirmed their intention to cooperate in the field of civil nuclear power.
- 02/18/06** — The “**Thar Express**” railroad linking Rajasthan with Pakistan’s Sindh province was resumed after more than four decades in suspension. Also, **Indian officials confirmed the country’s first avian flu infections.**
- 02/17/06** — Prime Minister Singh assured Parliament that India’s 2/4 IAEA vote did not detract from India’s “traditionally close and friendly relations” with Iran and that his government remained committed to the proposed Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline.
- 02/15/06** — **H.Con.Res. 344**, expressing the sense of Congress that New Delhi and the state of Jammu and Kashmir should take immediate steps to remedy the situation of the Kashmiri Pandits, was introduced in the House.
- 02/14/06** — **A group of six nonproliferation experts wrote a letter to Members of Congress** reiterating their belief that India’s commitments under the current terms of the proposed U.S.-India civil nuclear cooperation deal “do not justify making far-reaching exceptions to U.S. law and international nonproliferation norms.”
- 02/10/06** — **The State Department’s Bureau of South Asian Affairs was reorganized** to include official responsibility for U.S. diplomatic relations with Afghanistan and the five Central Asian states, and will now be called the Bureau for South and Central Asian Affairs. On the same day, **suspected Maoist militants killed eight Indian security personnel** and injured nine others in an attack on a government facility in Chhattisgarh.
- 02/08/06** — Senior Indian nuclear scientist and Atomic Energy Commission Chair Anil Kakodkar told an interviewer that India’s nuclear energy and nuclear deterrent requirements preclude placing the country’s fast breeder reactors under IAEA safeguards and he claimed that any U.S. requests in this vein amounted to a “moving of the goal posts.”
- 02/04/06** — **India voted with the majority on an IAEA resolution to “report” Iran’s controversial nuclear program to the U.N. Security Council.** Leftist parties and the regional Samajwadi Party criticized New Delhi’s vote, calling it “unacceptable” and a capitulation to U.S. pressure.
- 02/03/06** — The Indian Navy declined an offer to lease two U.S. P-3C maritime reconnaissance aircraft, calling the arrangements “expensive.”
- 01/31/06** — Former Indian National Security Advisor Mishra said the July 2005 agreement on U.S.-India civil nuclear cooperation “should be thrown in the waste paper basket.”
- 01/29/06** — U.S. Ambassador to India Mulford criticized Indian leftist parties for their opposition to opening India’s retail market to foreign investment.
- 01/27/06** — Saudi King Abdullah visited New Delhi, where **India and Saudi Arabia signed a pact** to expand bilateral counterterrorism cooperation, trade and investment opportunities, and to develop a “strategic energy partnership.”
- 01/25/06** — **U.S. Ambassador to India Mulford explicitly linked progress on a proposed U.S.-India civil nuclear cooperation agreement with India’s upcoming IAEA vote on Iran’s nuclear program**, saying if India chose not to vote with the United States, he believed the U.S.-India civil nuclear cooperation initiative “will die in the Congress.”